

Commission on the Status of Men

Minutes – August 28 2009, 1 – 3:30 PM
Legislative Office Building Room 206 - Concord, NH

1. Call to Order/Introduction of the Commissioners and Guests - **Chairman Joe Mastromarino was late due to another commitment and Mike Geanoulis arrived late. Commissioner David Lauren sent regrets. Members Larry Colby, Dr Scott Meyer and Cam Sinclair called the meeting to order at 1:10. One seat on the Commission remains empty awaiting approval by the Governor and Governor's Executive Council. Others in attendance: Robert Parker, Thomas and Jamie Lee Sawyer, and Linda Sawyer**
2. Adopt Agenda –**Larry Colby asked to add item b under 4, Treasurer's Report, 'Support for NE Fathering Conference' and offered a motion. Scott Meyer seconded and the agenda was adopted with the change**
3. Secretary's Report/Approval of June Minutes – **Larry distributed minutes from the June meeting (attached). Cam Sinclair offered the motion to approve the minutes with a second from Larry and the motion carried**
4. Treasurer's Report – **(David Lauren was absent)**
 - a. NHPIRC (Parent Information and Resource Center): Bill Payment – **Larry asked if the \$250 dollar bill had been paid and volunteered to check with Barry Bodell, NH Administrative Services at the meeting break. (This was accomplished and Larry informed members that the bill had been paid in June)**
 - b. Support for NE Fathering Conference – **Larry asked members to provide financial support for the 11th Annual Fathering Conference scheduled for March 17-19 in Newport RI. He moved to approve \$500 dollars for support and Cam seconded. Larry noted that \$500 dollars was provided last year and the NH Commission on the Status of Men was listed as a sponsor on each brochure. He shared that a supporting donation of \$1,000 dollars would offer five free registrations that could be used by NHCSM members and/or provided to NH dads to cover the \$200 dollar individual registration fee. Scott noted that some upcoming projects that the Commission would like to pay for such as posters showing males in a positive light should be considered. He noted that money could be increased if at a subsequent meeting if desired. The motion to provide \$500 dollars for the 11th Annual Fathering Conference passed**
5. Paternity Fraud/Model Paternity Bill – **Mike Geanoulis introduced the topic and Mr. Robert Parker. Attorney Parker shared a draft containing possible language for a legislative bill crafted by Carnell Smith, Executive Director of US Citizens against Paternity Fraud. Robert and Thomas Sawyer offered testimony concerning Sawyer's experience upon discovery that he was not the biological father of his son. Thomas sought to end child support payments due to this fact and to bring charges against his former wife for fraud. His unsuccessful efforts brought him to the attention of Robert and his group, US Citizens against Paternity Fraud. Thomas made clear that he loved, cared for and testified that he continues to provide a home for his son while continuing to pay child support to his old wife. Commissioner Geanoulis suggested that**

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establishment of paternity and rectifying or seeking relief from court-ordered payments for children not one's own were the two issues he heard in the testimony. Mike offered a motion: **The NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men) supports legislation which protects NH children and families from the harmful effects of paternity fraud. Larry seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mr. Sawyer and Robert Parker thanked the Commission for the opportunity to testify and members of the Commission expressed hope that families in NH might be spared the trauma of false paternity in the very near future**

6. Letter of Support-NH Commission on the Status of Women: Follow-Up – **Larry admitted he and the men's commission missed the opportunity to offer public support for the women's commission to receive full state funding. He suggested keeping this idea alive: members of each Commission share at least these goals those of supporting strong NH families and safe environments for children**
7. NH Children's Trust Fund (NHCTF)/Partners – **Mike asked Larry to renew efforts to have the Commission on the Status of Men listed as a supporting partner on the NH CAN (NH Child Advocacy Network) website**
8. NH HHS Commissioner Toumpas/'\$1,000,000,000 Dollar Man' Update - 3 min
 - a. 100 Billion Dollar Man: The Annual Cost of Fatherlessness – **Joe Mastromarino said he has not yet drafted an invitation to Mr. Neal Boutin, liaison to the Commission from NH Health and Human Services to talk about cost of fatherlessness report. Mike suggested inviting Mr. Boutin to the September meeting and Joe said he would draft an invitation for member's consideration before mailing it formally to Boutin**
9. NHCSM Internship – **Commissioner Meyer has had contact with the Sexual Awareness and Gender Education office at PSU (Plymouth State University) about an intern and discussions are on-going. Larry said he will have a similar conversation with Dr. Margaret Walsh of the Sociology Department at Keene State College if she contacts him about Head Start internships**
10. Pro Bono Lawyers Update – **(Tabled until Commissioner Lauren's return)**
11. RSA 167:2-b - public assistance to blind, aged, or disabled persons, and to dependent children – **Mike brought the topic up and offered a motion: The NH Commission on the Status of Men supports legislation to modify NH law chapter 167 public assistance to blind, aged, or disabled persons, and to dependent children as follows (changes bolded) to make it more gender neutral:**

Section 167:2-b

Employment of Relatives of Persons Receiving Aid to Dependent Children or Public Welfare Assistance. – No person who is otherwise eligible for aid to dependent children or public assistance based on financial need shall receive public welfare assistance from the state unless and until all able-bodied adult **males PERSONS** under the age of 65 years, except those regularly attending school, related to such person, and regularly residing in the same household as such person, and legally liable to contribute to the support of such person and not prevented from maintaining employment and contributing to the support of such person by reason of physical or mental disability or other substantial or other justifiable cause, are employed on a full-time basis. The amount or amounts earned by the persons obliged to maintain employment hereunder shall be taken into consideration in determining the level of need for aid to dependent children or public assistance. Nothing

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in this section shall be so construed to deny to any minor dependent child any needed aid to dependent children or public assistance to which he **OR SHE** would be otherwise entitled. Unrelated adult ~~males~~ **PERSONS** living in the same household in loco parentis as to any such person seeking aid to dependent children or public assistance shall be obliged to contribute to his or her support to the same extent as the ~~father~~ **PARENT** of such person, and in default thereof, shall be subject to the same penalties as the ~~father~~ **PARENT** of such person would be in such case. If anything in this section conflicts with federal law or regulation related thereto, the federal law or regulation shall take precedence.

***Source.* 1969, 451:1, eff. Sept. 1, 1969.**

Larry supported the motion and it carried unanimously

- 12. Web Site Update – Larry offered thanks to Mike for getting minutes, attachments and agendas updated on the website and offered continued thanks Scott Garman for his continuing work on the site**
- 13. Public Input I – Commissioners discussed an appropriate way to approach NH legislators to see if they might be inclined to support some of the work of the Commission and how to solicit their help if they were so inclined. Scott talked about certain legislators and executive counselors who are open and willing to work and suggested contacting them as individual Commission members. Mike said that a broader approach could be tried. Larry suggested that the Commission was at a point where thoughtful, proper and necessary suggestion for changes to NH laws and how they are interpreted were being made. Members agreed that Commission members contact individual legislators and the legislature as a whole to consider proposals such as the two approved today dealing with paternity fraud and sexist language in state laws**
- 14. Commission Seat Update – Joe said he continues to be rebuffed by the Governor’s office in regards to the unfilled Commission seat. He will redouble his efforts**
- 15. Fathering Outreach/Posters – Discussed earlier and Scott will continue trying to get some images produced to review as a group at the next meeting. Commissioners can decide to pursue pricing and next steps for posters**
- 16. Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting –None**
- 17. Announcements –**
 - a. mensstatus.blogtownhall.com – Mike shared a blog entry he submitted to Townhall.Com. Members thanked him for his on-going resolve in the issue of fatherless children. Larry suggested signing off on this blog site as chair of the Father/Child Connection and a member of the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men). Michael agreed. He also offered to share submissions with interested members**
 - b. Neal Boutin - Manager of Parenthood Programs, Division of Child Support Services – (Noted above)**
 - c. Parent Advocacy Day-October 15 2009-Legislative Office Building, Concord – Larry shared posters (attached) and asked if members wanted more to hang in their towns. Joe and Scott took some**
- 18. Public Input II – (None) The meeting ended at 3:59**

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Next Meeting: Friday September 25 2009 1:00 – 3:30 PM
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Concord NH